



Jakarta as A Global City: Exploring Key Supporting Indicators for Urban Diplomacy

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Abstract. As cities increasingly function as significant actors in global governance, urban diplomacy has emerged as a critical tool for advancing their international interests and development goals. This article examines the case of Jakarta, a megacity striving to enhance its position within the global urban hierarchy, with the primary objective of constructing a comprehensive framework of the key indicators that support its urban diplomacy. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review methodology, rigorously guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol. The data collected was synthesized through a thematic analysis, utilizing a PESTLE framework to categorize a wide range of indicators into a dual model of internal capacities and external opportunities. The results demonstrate that Jakarta's diplomacy is driven by a combination of internal assets, including proactive political leadership, a growing technological capacity centered on its smart city program, and a distinct portfolio of green policies. These strengths are leveraged in response to external factors such as the competitive dynamics of the ASEAN region and the collaborative opportunities presented by multilateral city networks. The analysis reveals that Jakarta employs a sophisticated strategy of "niche diplomacy," particularly in the environmental sector, to differentiate itself from regional competitors. The main finding is that this strategic niche-building is Jakarta's primary mechanism for advancing its global city ambitions. This implies that cities can achieve significant influence by cultivating leadership in specific policy areas, providing a valuable model for other aspiring global cities.

Keywords: Urban Diplomacy, Global City, Jakarta, Paradiplomacy, ASEAN.

1 Introduction

Following the enactment of the Law on the Special Province of Jakarta, the central government has prioritized the city's development into a global city (Indonesia, 2024). In support of this objective, the regional government has outlined a vision to enhance Jakarta's competitiveness as a global city in its bi-decennial Regional Long-Term Development Plan for 2025-2045 (Jakarta, 2024). These policy directives formalize an

existing trajectory, as Jakarta has long demonstrated its global city characteristics, particularly in its function as a center of economic growth and critical node for capital flow within the ASEAN region, as well as the global urban network.

Jakarta exemplifies its function as a global city by managing the hypermobility of capital and providing the centralized command functions for global economic operations, key characteristics identified by Sassen (2000). This role is materialized in business hubs like the Sudirman Central Business District, which hosts a high concentration of multinational corporations, foreign banks, and global financial institutions that integrate Jakarta into global processes. The city's strategic importance is further underscored by its attraction of US\$4.83 billion in foreign direct investment across 20,028 projects in 2023 (BPS Statistics DKI Jakarta Province, 2025). Moreover, the presence of 4,702 foreign companies and a workforce of 6,306 foreign professionals highlights Jakarta's role as a critical site for the specialized talent who provide the expertise necessary for complex, transnational operations (BPS Statistics DKI Jakarta Province, 2025). Jakarta's global connectivity is not limited to the economic sphere but is also strengthened through political networks in inter-city collaboration. The city actively maintains sister city relationships with other global cities such as Bangkok, Tokyo, and Jeddah (Megawati, 2019) and participates in global networks of cities, including C40 Cities, United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), Urban 20 (U20), and ICLEI.

On a regional scale, Jakarta functions as a primary strategic site, anchored by its status as the largest urban agglomeration in ASEAN, with a population exceeding 20 million for the past two decades (Cybriwsky & Ford, 2001; Tirtosudarmo, 2022; Martinez & Masron, 2020). Beyond its demographic weight, Jakarta's role as a key political and diplomatic node is firmly established. It has long been affirmed as the diplomatic capital of ASEAN, a role institutionalized by the presence of the ASEAN Secretariat since 1981 (Yu, 2019). This function is further evidenced by the presence of 103 foreign diplomatic missions, including embassies, consulates, and high commissions from various nations (Embassies, 2025).

According to the 2024 Kearney Global Cities Index, Jakarta ranks 74th, placing it ahead of Manila (78th) but behind other ASEAN global cities: Kuala Lumpur (55th), Bangkok (34th), and Singapore (5th) (Kearney, 2024). This placement does not dispute Jakarta's status as a global city, but rather highlights the need for improvement across several indicators, including information exchange and human capital. Improving Jakarta's competitiveness, therefore, necessitates the strategic policies aimed at addressing these issues. Such efforts require Jakarta's international engagement, which is instrumental for accessing global resources needed for a more favorable global image.

Urban diplomacy serves as a strategic tool for Jakarta to enhance its global collaboration, attract foreign investment, and strengthen its international positioning (Simarmata, 2024). This form of urban networking is operationalized through mechanisms such as participation in multilateral forums, the establishment of sister city partnerships, and engagement in initiatives addressing global issues (Suryokusumo, 2004). Jakarta possesses a significant historical precedent in this matter by having been active in inter-city networking since Indonesia's independence. Today, its ongoing efforts encompass diverse fields, including cultural, health, economic, and environmental diplomacy.

Despite Jakarta's growing initiatives on the global network, its urban diplomacy for global city development remains underexplored in scholarly literature. Prior research is often fragmented, focusing on isolated case studies like the Formula E event rather than holistically situating the city within a broader diplomacy framework. To address this gap, this study asks, "What are the key indicators supporting Jakarta's urban diplomacy as a global city?" It aims to construct a framework of internal and external indicators by systematically reviewing literature using the PRISMA 2020 protocol to ensure the validity of the findings.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Rise of Network Society

The contemporary global landscape is fundamentally shaped by a new organizational logic, which Castells (2010) terms the "network society." This paradigm is defined by a global economy where the core activities of production, consumption, and circulation are organized on a planetary scale and operate in real-time. The defining feature of this economy is its reliance on the instantaneous flows and exchanges of capital, information, data, and cultural communication. These flows are not formless; they are channeled through complex networks that are facilitated by the revolution in information and communication technologies. The proliferation of these networks has generated multifaceted and transformative impacts, reconfiguring not only corporate structures and labor markets but also fundamental human conceptions of space and time. A critical characteristic of this new order is that the processes associated with these global networks increasingly transcend the jurisdictional boundaries and regulatory capacities of traditional nation-states, creating a new and complex domain for governance and economic management.

Within this global informational economy, coordination and control are paramount. The system is organized through a series of command-and-control centers that are essential for managing, coordinating, and innovating the interconnected activities of transnational corporations. At the heart of this process is the continuous generation of knowledge and the circulation of information, which have become the primary sources of productivity and power across all economic sectors (Castells, 2010). While advanced telecommunication systems enable these networks to be geographically dispersed across any location that meets specific infrastructural and regulatory criteria, Castells, drawing heavily upon the foundational work of Sassen (2000), underscores that these critical command-and-control functions are not placeless. They do not exist in a disembodied space but are instead anchored within a distinct spatial logic. These functions exhibit a strategic tendency to concentrate in a specific geography of "global cities," which serve as the physical and organizational nodes for the entire global network.

This network of cities is inherently hierarchical. Citing the work of Cappelletti, Castells (2010) highlights the interdependent and complementary relationships that exist among the cities and regions that perform central functions within the global system.

While a vast number of cities from across the world are interconnected in this web, global cities occupy the highest hierarchy, directing the flows of capital and information that drive the world economy. Further elaborating on Sassen's framework, Castells explains how these cities form integrated production and management networks characterized by their strategic global role, flexibility, and adaptive capacity. A global city, therefore, is not merely a static physical location but is better understood as a process. It is a process that connects advanced centers of production, innovation, and service consumption with highly skilled local populations and specialized corporate infrastructures that are necessary to support its global functions.

Consequently, a city's optimal functionality in this new paradigm is only achievable by establishing and maintaining robust network connections with other global cities, central hubs, and supporting regions. This dynamic and interconnected urban network constitutes what Castells (2010) famously terms the "space of flows": the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows. It is within this space of flows—a space of electronic and physical exchange—that the essential circulation of knowledge, technology, capital, and talent occurs, driving the innovation and growth of the global economy. For any city aspiring to enhance its international standing, its primary challenge is to secure a strategic and influential position within this global space of flows.

2.2 Urban Diplomacy

The structural realities of the network society, with its emphasis on inter-city connections, have given rise to new forms of agency for urban actors. As cities become increasingly significant players on the global stage, they have developed practices to formally manage their international relations, collectively known as urban diplomacy. In its broadest sense, urban diplomacy describes the collaborative efforts of cities to serve as platforms for discussing and addressing shared international issues (Vos, 2016). This practice reflects a significant paradigm shift, recognizing cities not merely as subordinate administrative units but as significant global actors in their own right. Manfredi-Sánchez (2023) further refines this concept, noting that urban diplomacy often involves a city taking the lead in solving local problems that have global implications, and in doing so, engaging a wide array of actors beyond the municipal government, including public institutions, private sector corporations, and civil society organizations.

Within this broad field, several related terms with nuanced distinctions are frequently used. The term "city diplomacy" often refers more specifically to the practical application of these principles. It is the practice whereby city officials and representatives actively establish and maintain relationships with foreign stakeholders, both public and private, to address global challenges and foster international cooperation (Teruso, 2016). This practice has evolved significantly over time. As noted by Koelemaij (2023) and Özçakıl (2023), what once consisted primarily of bilateral cultural exchanges or "twinning" arrangements has now expanded to encompass complex economic dimensions and participation in sophisticated multilateral inter-urban networks. This evolution reflects the growing complexity of the global challenges that cities face,

from climate change and public health crises to economic competitiveness and technological disruption, which necessitate more strategic and multifaceted forms of cooperation.

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Despite these terminological nuances, all the concepts described above point to a single, overarching phenomenon: the process of network-building between cities and regions that transcends national borders. These inter-urban networks build a form of proximity that overcomes the traditional limitations of geographical distance and time, enabled by the same global advancements in information technology that underpin the network society. It is through these diplomatic networks that the flows of capital, knowledge, and technology are channeled and exchanged between cities across the globe. In the specific context of this research, urban diplomacy is not merely an interesting phenomenon but a critical strategic imperative. As Simarmata (2024) explicitly states, diplomacy is one of the core strategies required to support Jakarta's development as a global city. Therefore, urban diplomacy is an indispensable tool for empowering Jakarta to foster vital international collaborations, attract the capital flows essential for its development, and ultimately enhance its strategic position within the global network of cities.

2.3 ASEAN Global Cities

The primary urban centers of the ASEAN region—Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, and Manila—are engaged in a dynamic and spirited competition. As the central nodes of their national economies, they are increasingly assertive actors in global governance, each vying to attract capital, skilled professional talent, and tourism by cultivating a "global city" brand (Wu, 2020). This competitive landscape, however, is not uniform; it is a distinct hierarchy defined by varying levels of global integration, infrastructural development, and diplomatic influence. At the top of hierarchy is Singapore, which functions as the region's "alpha" global city. Its dominance is not merely perceptual but is empirically grounded in its role as a strategic command-and-control center for the world economy. Analysis of advanced producer service (APS) firm networks reveals Singapore's unparalleled "global network connectivity," placing it as the

primary hub where major corporate strategies for the region are formulated, a status its neighbors have not achieved (Taylor et al., 2014). By contrast, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, and Manila function as vital secondary centers, crucial for their national economies but occupying a less central position within the global "space of flows".

This established hierarchy is reinforced by divergent development trajectories and underlying structural conditions. Singapore's leadership is built upon decades of continuous and highly efficient infrastructure upgrades, innovative land use, and its established role as a financial, technological, and logistics hub (Phienwej, 2023). The development paths of its peers are constrained by more significant challenges. Kuala Lumpur, while highly advanced, has only recently achieved the integrated, centralized policy approach to crucial areas like transit-oriented development that has long characterized its southern neighbor (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Jakarta, Bangkok, and Manila share vulnerabilities to environmental degradation, including pollution, traffic congestion, and the impacts of coastal proximity (Edelman, 2023). Jakarta's situation is particularly precarious, as it faces a world-leading rate of land subsidence, an existential threat that fundamentally complicates its long-term development and distinguishes its challenges from those of its regional counterparts (Phienwej, 2023). This infrastructural and environmental deficit creates a clear development gap, explaining why Jakarta lags behind Singapore and other ASEAN global cities, on several indicators as seen on Table 1 below.

Table 1. ASEAN Global City Ranks

Cities	GPCI	GCI Kearney	Oxford Economics
Singapore	5	5	42
Bangkok	38	34	192
Kuala Lumpur	41	55	135
Jakarta	45	74	284
Manilla	-	78	256

Faced with this competitive and structural hierarchy, urban diplomacy has emerged as a strategic and necessary tool for cities like Jakarta to accelerate their development and enhance their global standing. While Singapore often acts as an "agenda-setter" within multilateral city networks, shaping regional frameworks like the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (Wu, 2020), other cities must carve out distinct diplomatic niches. Jakarta's recent strategy provides a compelling example of this. Recognizing its developmental lags, the city has strategically leveraged diplomacy to access global knowledge, attract sustainable investment, and project a progressive identity (Harakan, 2023; Luerdi, 2023). It has actively sought to distinguish itself by becoming a leader in green and climate diplomacy. Through tangible commitments within the C40 network and citizen-centric sustainability initiatives, Jakarta has cultivated a more forward-looking and policy-driven brand than Bangkok's reliance on cultural soft power or Manila's primary focus on domestic resilience (Hafizha, 2024). This proactive approach positions Jakarta not merely as a participant in ASEAN urban diplomacy but as an emerging

shaper, using its focused international engagement to address its domestic development challenges and navigate its position within the regional hierarchy.

3 Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology. This approach was deliberately chosen as it provides a rigorous, transparent, and replicable framework for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of knowledge on a particular topic (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). Given the research objective—to identify and construct a framework of key indicators supporting Jakarta's urban diplomacy—an SLR is superior to a traditional narrative review. It minimizes selection bias and ensures that the resulting framework is grounded in a comprehensive and systematically identified evidence base. To operationalize this SLR with the highest degree of rigor, this study strictly adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 protocol. The PRISMA 2020 statement, with its 27-item checklist, is the global standard for enhancing the validity and transparency of literature reviews, providing a clear and robust methodology for research planning, defining inclusion criteria, assessing quality, and synthesizing data (Page et al., 2021). Adherence to this protocol ensures that the research process is clearly reported, enabling the findings to be transferable and the methodology to be replicable by other researchers (del Amo et al., 2018; Mengist et al., 2020).

The source of data for this research consists exclusively of secondary data drawn from academic literature, including journal articles, conference proceedings, and scholarly book chapters. The data collection process was executed in two distinct phases to ensure maximum coverage of the relevant literature. The primary phase involved a systematic search of major academic databases conducted using Harzing's Publish or Perish software. This tool facilitated advanced searches across Scopus, Google Scholar, and Crossref, which were selected for their extensive coverage of social science and urban studies literature. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords and Boolean operators (AND/OR) to identify relevant publications. Search strings included terms: ("urban diplomacy" OR "city diplomacy" OR "paradiplomacy") AND ("Jakarta") AND ("global city"). The second phase of data collection involved a manual search to supplement the database queries. This included handsearching the reference lists of all identified key articles and reviews to uncover relevant studies that may not have been captured by the initial keyword search.

The selection of studies for inclusion in the review was guided by a formal screening process governed by a predefined set of criteria. To be included, a publication had to meet several conditions. Records were systematically excluded based on several criteria. Publications were excluded if their primary subject area was in the natural sciences, as the research focus is squarely on social, political, and economic dimensions. Reports were also excluded if they were non-academic sources (e.g., news articles, opinion pieces). It was required to focus substantively on the core concepts of urban diplomacy,

city diplomacy, or paradiplomacy, with a direct relevance to the context of Jakarta. The review was also limited to articles written in either Indonesian or English. This decision was made as these are the languages in which the author is proficient, thereby avoiding potential misinterpretations arising from translation and mitigating additional costs and time delays. The final exclusion criterion was accessibility; reports were not included in the final review if the full-text paper could not be retrieved, for instance, due to a lack of open access availability or institutional subscription. The entire screening process, documenting the number of records identified, included, and excluded at each stage, was meticulously tracked and is presented using the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (BMJ 2021;372:n71) to ensure full transparency, as seen in Figure 1 below.

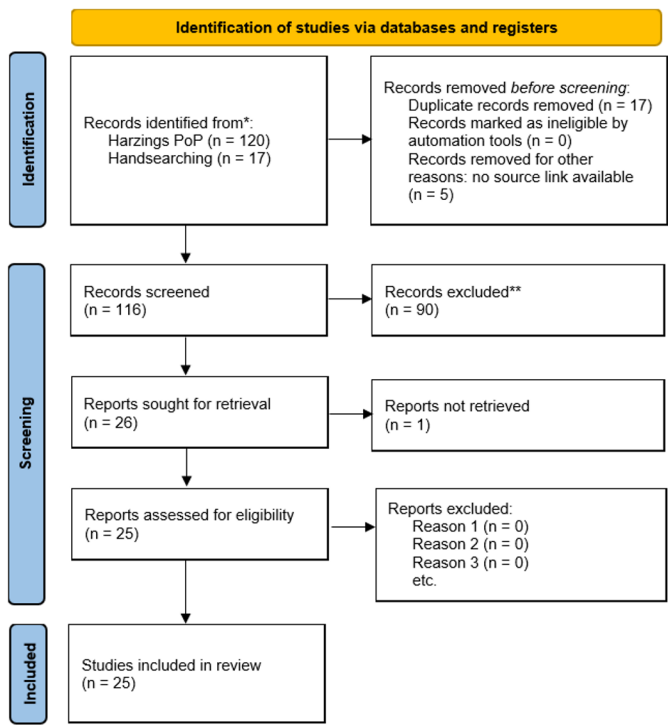


Fig. 1. Use of the PRISMA 2020 Protocol to Explore Key Supporting Factors for Urban Diplomacy to Support the Development of Jakarta as A Global City

For the data analysis and synthesis, this study utilized a thematic analysis approach, as defined by Clarke & Braun (2017). Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning, or "themes," within qualitative data. Its objective is not merely to summarize the content of the literature but to identify and interpret the key conceptual features and arguments across the data set to build a coherent analytical framework. The analysis was guided by an initial deductive framework developed by Kunc (2018), which categorizes indicators for city diplomacy into the six domains of the PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal,

and Environmental) model. These domains served as initial themes for coding and categorizing the data extracted from the selected literature. However, the analytical process was not strictly confined to this pre-existing framework. In line with the principles of rigorous thematic analysis, the coding process remained open to the inductive emergence of new themes and sub-themes directly from the data, allowing for the identification of novel indicators not anticipated by Kunc's (2018) model. The final list of studies included in this review is detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. List of Studies Included in Review Based on PRISMA 2020 Protocol and Its Contribution to Key Indicators of Urban Diplomacy to Support Jakarta's Development as A Global City

Author	Title
Luerdi, 2023a	Jakarta's City Branding as Para-diplomacy: Beyond Greening Stadium and Race
Luerdi, 2021	Paradiplomacy of Indonesian Sub-state Actor: Digital Diplomacy of Jakarta Government in Response to Covid-19
Luerdi, 2022	Para-diplomacy in Time Of Covid-19: Jakarta Regional Government's Objectives in Hosting International Youth Championship
Wu, 2020	City diplomacy, multilateral networks and the role of South-east Asia
Issundari, 2018	Paradiplomacy and Indonesian public diplomacy
Luerdi, 2023b	City leadership in para-diplomacy: drivers of Jakarta's international engagement in addressing covid-19 pandemic
Harakan, 2023	Indonesia's City Diplomacy in Promoting Global Sustainability Context through Urban Networks
Fathun, 2023	City Diplomacy Of Jakarta Government In The Environmental Sector In 2017-2021
Sidik et al., 2024	Jakarta International Literary Festival: a constructivist study of city identity and cultural diplomacy
Putri, 2022	Optimizing city diplomacy Indonesia for economic development through e-government implementation
Haidlir et al., 2024	Analysis of global tourism and creative economy trends to support Jakarta as a global city
Hafizha et al., 2024	Jakarta Sebagai Aktor Paradiplomasi Hijau Pada Masa Pemerintahan Anies Baswedan
Luthfiani, 2025	The Role of Jakarta-Berlin Sister City to Support Green City Program in 2018-2023
Mujiono et al., 2025	Jakarta-Berlin Collaboration in Implementing Jakarta Smart City and Achieving SDGs
Fathun, 2022	Peran Paradiplomacy dalam Presidensi G20 Indonesia: Studi Kasus Diplomasi Kota Jakarta pada Urban 20

Ferdilianto et al., 2023	Smart Cities and Tourism: A Paradiplomatic Approach Between Jakarta and Galicia
Nariswari, 2021	Diplomasi Publik Baru Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival 2020 dalam Mempromosikan Brand Kota “Enjoy Jakarta”
Susilowati & Adila, 2021	The Role of Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta in Improving Bilateral Relation between Indonesia and Palestine through Paradiplomacy: Sister City Cooperation between Jakarta and Jerusalem
Anjani, 2021	The Form of Jakarta-Berlin Paradiplomacy in Sister City Cooperation in the Field of Culture under International Relations
Prayogo & Juned, 2025	Indonesia's Smart City Diplomacy through ASEAN Smart Cities Network Shepherdship (2023-2025)
Dewi, 2021	Paradiplomasi Pemerintah Provinsi DKI Jakarta dalam Membangun Kerjasama Internasional Periode 2017-2019
Rusdy & Sunarti, 2025	The Establishment of Jakarta International School in Indonesia as A Reflection of Globalisation Through Education
Várnai, 2025	Water diplomacy cooperation between Indonesia and Hungary: improving water management infrastructure in the Jakarta metropolitan region
Khalifah, 2023	Implementasi Kerja Sama Sister City Kota Jakarta dengan Kota Beijing Mengenai Youth Exchange Program Tahun 2017–2019
Susilowati & Yunus, 2019	Sister City Jakarta-Yerusalem sebagai upaya memperkuat hubungan bilateral Indonesia-Palestina (studi kasus paradiplomacy pemprov DKI Jakarta–Yerusalem tahun 2019)

4 Analysis

4.1 Internal Indicators of Urban Diplomacy to Support Jakarta as A Global City

Internal indicators are the foundational assets, capacities, and strategies originating within Jakarta that enable its government to act on the global stage. These indicators reflect the city’s inherent strengths and its deliberate policy choices in leveraging diplomacy for its development goals.

Political: The most prominent internal political indicator is the presence of proactive and visionary city leadership. The literature consistently demonstrates that the intensity, direction, and strategic focus of Jakarta’s paradiplomacy are significantly influenced by the personal commitment and ambition of its leaders. Such leadership is crucial for transforming crises into opportunities for international engagement, as seen in the digital diplomacy response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for taking calculated risks to host high-profile events for reputational and economic gain (Luerdi, 2023, 2022). This leadership capacity is supported by a growing institutional ability to engage in complex diplomatic activities. This is evidenced by the city's successful hosting and steering of

high-level international forums like the Urban 20 (U20) Mayors Summit, which showcased Jakarta's organizational and leadership capabilities on a global platform, directly influencing the G20 agenda (Fathun, 2022). Furthermore, a crucial indicator of political sophistication is the strategic alignment of the city's paradiplomacy with national foreign policy objectives. The sister city cooperation with Jerusalem, for example, is not merely a municipal initiative but a deliberate act of sub-national diplomacy that supports and amplifies Indonesia's long-standing solidarity with Palestine, demonstrating a sophisticated synergy between local and national diplomatic tracks (Susilowati & Adila, 2021; Susilowati & Yunus, 2019).

Economic: Jakarta's urban diplomacy is heavily supported by a set of internal economic indicators aimed at enhancing its global competitiveness. A primary indicator is the strategic use of high-profile, event-driven diplomacy to attract investment and project a specific economic brand. Hosting events like the Formula E race and international sports championships serves as a deliberate strategy to signal that Jakarta is "open for business" and to create a global image of a modern, dynamic economic hub, a practice that Luerdi (2023, 2022) terms "spectacle-driven" branding. This is complemented by the city's vibrant and diverse creative economy, which is increasingly leveraged as a diplomatic asset. The strength of its creative industries, highlighted through events like the Jakarta International Literary Festival and the Java Jazz Festival, supports cultural tourism and helps construct a more multifaceted city brand centered on creativity and innovation (Haidlir et al., 2024; Sidik et al., 2024; Nariswari, 2021). Finally, a foundational indicator is the city's infrastructure that supports multinational corporations. This extends beyond physical assets to include critical social infrastructure, particularly high-quality international schools, which are essential for attracting and retaining the foreign professional talent that is vital for a global city's economy (Rusdy & Sunarti, 2025).

Social: The social indicators of Jakarta's urban diplomacy are rooted in its cultural assets and human capital infrastructure. The existence of world-class cultural assets and events with established international appeal, such as the Java Jazz Festival, functions as a powerful diplomatic asset. These events provide a platform for a "new public diplomacy" that engages a wide range of non-state actors—artists, audiences, and sponsors—to build soft power and promote the city's tourism brand (Nariswari, 2021). Beyond singular events, the presence of institutions catering to a global community is a prerequisite for functioning as a global city. Elite international schools, in particular, are a key indicator, as they provide the necessary educational infrastructure to support an expatriate community of professionals and diplomats, thereby fostering a cosmopolitan environment that attracts and retains global talent (Rusdy & Sunarti, 2025). These social assets are the raw materials for Jakarta's cultural diplomacy and its ability to project an attractive and diverse identity to the world.

Technological: Technological capacity has emerged as a critical internal indicator supporting Jakarta's urban diplomacy. The most significant asset is the mature digital infrastructure of the Jakarta Smart City program and its associated platforms like the JAKI super-app. These tools are not merely for domestic administration; they have proven to be powerful instruments for digital diplomacy, enabling the city to manage

crises effectively, engage with global networks virtually, and project an image of innovative and transparent governance (Luerdi, 2021). This proven capacity for digital diplomacy serves as a diplomatic calling card, positioning Jakarta as a regional leader in digital transformation and as a "shepherd" within the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (Prayogo & Juned, 2025). Furthermore, this technological maturity is a foundational element for optimizing diplomacy for economic development by streamlining bureaucratic processes and enhancing the city's attractiveness to foreign investors (Putri, 2022).

Legal: Underpinning all other internal factors is a strong legal foundation for paradiplomacy. The national policy of regional autonomy in Indonesia, institutionalized through laws such as Law No. 23 of 2014, provides provincial governments with the formal authority and legitimacy to establish and conduct international cooperation (Is-sundari, 2018). This legal framework is a critical enabling indicator, as it empowers Jakarta to act with a significant degree of freedom on the international stage. It allows the city to move beyond informal engagement to establish formal, binding agreements and partnerships, giving its diplomatic activities a level of stability and official recognition that is essential for long-term, effective international relations. This legal clarity distinguishes Jakarta's paradiplomacy from that of cities in more centralized states, providing it with a distinct structural advantage.

Environmental: Perhaps the most distinct set of internal indicators lies in the environmental sector, where Jakarta has consciously developed a tangible portfolio of implemented green policies that serves as credible content for its diplomacy. Initiatives such as the massive expansion of bicycle lanes, the pedestrianization of public spaces, and the electrification of the TransJakarta bus fleet provide the substantive proof points that support its diplomatic narrative as a climate leader (Fathun, 2023; Hafizha et al., 2024). This is reinforced by a clear political commitment to global climate targets through active participation and leadership roles in networks like C40, which translates local action into a global statement (Harakan, 2023). This strategy of "green paradiplomacy" is not only about branding but also about addressing internal challenges; the city's pressing environmental crises, such as water management, also function as internal drivers that compel Jakarta to seek pragmatic, technology-focused diplomatic solutions with international partners (Várnai, 2025).

Internal indicators of urban diplomacy to support the development of Jakarta as a global city are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Internal Indicators of Urban Diplomacy to Support Jakarta as a Global City

Internal Indicators	Details
Political	Proactive and visionary city leadership driving international engagement. Institutional capacity to host and lead high-level global forums (e.g., U20 Summit). Strategic alignment of city diplomacy with national foreign policy objectives.

Economic	Use of high-profile events (sports, entertainment) for economic branding and investment attraction. Vibrant and diverse creative economy (festivals, arts) leveraged as a diplomatic asset. Infrastructure that supports multinational corporations, including social infrastructure like international schools.
Social	World-class cultural assets and events with international appeal (e.g., Java Jazz Festival). Presence of institutions catering to a global community, fostering a cosmopolitan environment.
Technological	Mature digital infrastructure, especially the Jakarta Smart City program and its platforms (JAKI app). Proven capacity for digital diplomacy in crisis management and international collaboration.
Legal	Strong legal foundation for diplomacy provided by Indonesia's national law on regional autonomy.
Environmental	Tangible portfolio of implemented green policies (e.g., bicycle lanes, electric buses) that serves as credible content for diplomacy. Clear commitment to global climate targets and sustainability.

4.2 External Indicators of Urban Diplomacy to Support Jakarta as A Global City

External indicators are the opportunities, structures, and pressures within the international system that Jakarta leverages or responds to through its diplomatic activities. These indicators constitute the arena in which the city's diplomacy is practiced.

Political: The primary external political indicator is the existence of a robust ecosystem of multilateral city networks (C40, UCLG), which provide established platforms for engagement, learning, and profile-raising (Wu, 2020). These networks offer a structured environment where Jakarta can access global policy dialogues and benchmark its progress against international standards. This is complemented by the formal framework of bilateral sister city partnerships, which offer structured channels for deep, long-term cooperation on specific technical and cultural issues, as seen in the relationships with Berlin and Beijing (Luthfiani, 2025; Khalifah, 2023). A third indicator is the emergence of geopolitical opportunities, where the city can leverage national-level events for its own diplomatic gain. The national G20 Presidency, for example, provided a unique platform that elevated the city's role by allowing it to host the U20 Summit and engage directly with the world's most powerful urban leaders (Fathun, 2022).

Economic: The external economic indicators are largely defined by global and regional dynamics. The intensely competitive landscape among ASEAN global cities provides a powerful impetus for strategic diplomatic differentiation. The need to compete with established hubs like Singapore and rising peers like Kuala Lumpur for investment and talent forces Jakarta to define and promote its unique value proposition through diplomatic channels (Wu, 2020). Secondly, global economic trends, such as

the shift towards experiential tourism and the growth of the creative economy, create external pressures and opportunities that the city must diplomatically respond to in order to remain competitive and relevant in the global market (Haidlir et al., 2024).

Social: The key external social indicators are the opportunities for people-to-people exchanges facilitated by international partnerships. The formal frameworks of sister city agreements and other bilateral MoUs provide the external mechanism for implementing cultural and youth exchange programs. These initiatives are vital for building long-term goodwill and fostering the deep, personal social connections that underpin effective and sustainable urban diplomacy, moving beyond purely governmental interactions (Khalifah, 2023; Anjani, 2021).

Technological: For a developing-world city, a critical external indicator is access to foreign expertise and advanced technology through diplomatic channels. Jakarta actively leverages partnerships to address its own technological gaps. The collaboration with Berlin to enhance its Smart City program, the specialized cooperation with Hungary to access advanced water management technologies, and partnerships with actors like Galicia on smart tourism are all examples of using diplomacy as a conduit for technological and knowledge transfer (Mujiono et al., 2025; Várnai, 2025; Ferdilianto et al., 2023).

Legal: Overarching global agendas and agreements provide a crucial external legal and normative framework for Jakarta’s diplomacy. International frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a set of universally recognized targets that grant legitimacy to local action and provide a common language for international cooperation. Jakarta has effectively leveraged this external framework in its partnerships, such as the collaboration with Berlin, to structure its goals and demonstrate its alignment with global standards, thereby enhancing the credibility of its diplomatic efforts (Mujiono et al., 2025).

Environmental: The global sustainability agenda provides both a normative direction and practical support for Jakarta's green diplomacy. Access to best practices, technical assistance, and a collaborative network of peers through partnerships with cities like Berlin or membership in C40 are critical external resources. These platforms not only provide knowledge but also create a sense of shared purpose and accountability, enabling Jakarta to accelerate its environmental programs and policies far more effectively than it could in isolation (Luthfiani, 2025; Harakan, 2023).

External indicators of urban diplomacy to support the development of Jakarta as a global city are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4. External Indicators of Urban Diplomacy to Support the Development of Jakarta as a Global City

Internal Indicators	Details
Political	The existence of a robust ecosystem of multilateral city networks (C40, UCLG) providing platforms for engagement. The formal framework of bilateral sister city partnerships for structured cooperation. Geopolitical opportunities, such as the national G20 Presidency, that elevate the city's role.

Economic	The competitive landscape among ASEAN global cities, which drives the need for strategic diplomatic differentiation. Global economic trends (e.g., in tourism, creative industries) that the city must diplomatically respond to.
Social	Opportunities for people-to-people exchanges (youth, culture, arts) facilitated by international partnerships.
Technological	Access to foreign expertise, advanced technology, and best practices through diplomatic channels and partnerships.
Legal	Global agendas and agreements (e.g., the Sustainable Development Goals) that provide a normative framework and legitimacy for local action and international cooperation.
Environmental	The global sustainability agenda, which provides direction and support for Jakarta's green diplomacy. Access to best practices and technical assistance from partner cities for environmental programs.
Political	The existence of a robust ecosystem of multilateral city networks (C40, UCLG) providing platforms for engagement. The formal framework of bilateral sister city partnerships for structured cooperation.

4.3 Jakarta’s Evolving Role in the ASEAN Urban Diplomacy Network

The interplay of these internal and external indicators positions Jakarta in a dynamic and evolving role within the ASEAN urban diplomacy network. The established hierarchy, as identified by Wu (2020) and Taylor et al. (2013), clearly places Singapore as the region's undisputed agenda-setter and primary global node. Historically, this has positioned other ASEAN capitals, including Jakarta, as "participants" or "followers," primarily engaging in these networks for capacity building and knowledge acquisition. However, this analysis reveals that Jakarta is strategically leveraging its diplomatic assets to transcend this role and carve out a distinct identity.

Rather than competing with Singapore on its terms as a financial and logistical hub, Jakarta is using its internal strengths to build a unique diplomatic brand centered on climate leadership and sustainable urbanism. Its portfolio of tangible green policies (an internal indicator) allows it to engage in multilateral networks like C40 (an external indicator) not just as a learner but as a contributor and a model for other large, developing-world cities. This "green paradplomacy" (Hafizha et al., 2024) is a deliberate strategy to differentiate itself from the cultural soft power of Bangkok or the more economically focused branding of Kuala Lumpur. By successfully hosting the U20, Jakarta demonstrated its capacity for political leadership, moving beyond mere participation to agenda-shaping on a global scale (Fathun, 2022). Therefore, while Jakarta may not challenge Singapore's overall dominance, its urban diplomacy reflects a sophisticated strategy to build issue-specific leadership. It is evolving from a general participant into a key shaper of the regional and global dialogue on urban sustainability, demonstrating

how a city can strategically navigate its position within a competitive hierarchy by cultivating and diplomatically projecting its unique strengths.

5 Conclusions

This study systematically identified the key indicators supporting Jakarta's urban diplomacy, categorizing them into a dual framework of internal capacities and external factors. The main results show that Jakarta's international engagement is driven by internal assets such as proactive political leadership, a growing technological capacity, and a distinct portfolio of green policies, which are activated by external forces like the competitive ASEAN landscape and opportunities within multilateral networks.

The study's main finding is that these indicators enable a sophisticated strategy of "niche diplomacy." Rather than competing directly with dominant regional hubs like Singapore, Jakarta strategically leverages its unique strengths, particularly in the environmental sector, to build a distinct international identity. Its focused environmental diplomacy is the primary mechanism for advancing its global city ambitions, positioning it as a leader in sustainable urbanism for the Global South. This finding suggests that cities can achieve significant global influence by focusing on specific policy areas where they can demonstrate leadership, providing a valuable model for other aspiring global cities.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a holistic, empirically grounded framework for analyzing urban diplomacy in a megacity of the Global South, moving beyond the fragmented case studies that have characterized previous research. It offers a valuable analytical lens for urban studies, international relations, and public administration. For future research, this framework provides a robust foundation for several avenues of inquiry. Subsequent studies could employ quantitative methods to measure the impact of these diplomatic indicators, conduct direct comparative research with other ASEAN capitals, or undertake longitudinal analyses to track the evolution of Jakarta's role on the global stage. Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its clear contribution to both theory and practice, offering a comprehensive model for scholars and a practical tool for policymakers to understand and enhance the role of diplomacy as a global city.

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